

## Practice Space

In this chapter, we introduce and define the metaphors of the practice space and practice session as the guiding frame for the arguments presented throughout this book about the relationship between creative practices and critical pedagogy. In particular, the practice session suggests a time and place for initiating a sustained process of experimentation, repetition, and refinement of acts and ideas. The practice session also functions as a metaphor that is, for us, productively linked to theories of performance studies that understand performance as a creative and culturally situated act. In other words, the practice session is an act of performance that works to imagine and make realities.

The practice *space* is the location of the practice session. Physically, the practice space is a unique location that allows and even encourages creative and generative practices. In this chapter, we define the practice space as a physical and a theoretical location. Physically, we articulate and define our book as a kind of practice space, or location, for experimenting with and rehearsing ideas about the relationship between performance and critical pedagogy. Theoretically, we locate our project within the research contexts of performance studies, critical pedagogy, and critical communication pedagogy (CCP). We call for the recognition and development of physical and theoretical spaces for practice in terms of the creation of embodied and inclusive pedagogies. We imagine the classroom as a practice space, and the interactions and events that take place in the classroom as creative and generative acts of practice and rehearsal.

## Agenda

1. Warm-up
2. Creative practices and critical pedagogy
3. Defining practice sessions and spaces
4. Engagement: Creating classroom practice spaces and sessions
5. Closing

## WARM-UP *Sensory Focus*

Take a deep breath.

Exhale.

*(Repeat)*

Notice the way the space feels around you.

What is the temperature in the space where you are reading? Is it hot? Is it cold? Is it humid? Is it dry? Is there snow? Or, is there ice? Is there fog? How does your skin feel? Are you dry? Are you sweating? Do you feel a chill? Is your body tense? Is your body relaxed?

Notice the textures of the space. Do you feel the bumpiness of a plastic classroom chair or some other surface? Do you feel the smooth wood casing of the pencil you're using to make notes in the margins? Do you feel the rough uneven texture of plaster walls? Do you feel the cool terrazzo tile, or fuzzy carpet, or smooth wood, underneath your bare feet? How is your body interacting with or relating to the space?

Notice the physical limits of the space.

How does the space enable you to read? Are you sitting? Standing? Crouching? Leaning? Hunching? Laying down? On the move? What is the size of the space? How are you contained within it? What other objects or people inhabit the space with you? Are you in a library? Are you at a table in your favorite restaurant? Snuggled up in your favorite chair at home? Uncomfortably squeezed into the middle seat of an airplane? Are you wandering around a park or garden? Or, riding an empty metro?

Take a deep breath.

Exhale.

Notice the sounds in the space around you.

Is there music? Are there conversations? Are there humming lights or appliances? Is there a phone ringing? Do you hear other bodies moving

around you? Are there dogs, or cats, or birds? Is there a baby crying or child vying for attention? Can you hear the wind? Running water? The whir of a mountain breeze? Do you hear sirens? Is there traffic? Do you hear the sounds of construction?

Notice the sounds of your body.

Listen to the sound of your breathing. Hear the sound of your voice as you softly read these words out loud.

Take a deep breath.

Exhale.

Notice the scents and odors of the space around you.

Are there pleasant fragrances and aromas? Is there a freshly brewed pot of coffee? Or, is there a vegetable curry simmering on the stove? Are there cookies in the oven? Is there a lingering smell of cologne or lotion? Do you smell freshly cut grass? Or newly fallen leaves? Do you smell rain? Is there a foul stench in the air? Do you smell burnt toast? Or the chemical scent of cleaner? Do you smell cigarette smoke? Or the sweet smell of pipe tobacco? Do you smell exhaust from a car? Or a nearby factory? Smell the pages of this book. Does it smell inky, fresh off the presses? Musty? Does it smell like the tea you spilled on it this morning?

Take a deep breath.

Exhale.

Notice the flavor of the space around you.

Taste the air in the space as you inhale. Do you taste rain? Is there water in the air in the form of fog, mist, or snow? Take a swig of the beverage you've been sipping. What is the flavor of your drink? Coffee? Tea? Fruit/Vegetable Juice? Lemonade? Smoothie? Milkshake? Powdered Supplement? Wine? Beer? Water? How does the city, spring, river, well, or purified water taste? Is there a lingering taste in your mouth from your last meal or snack? Or the minty flavor of mouthwash or toothpaste? Or the acidity of a sour grape?

Take a deep breath.

Exhale.

Notice the sights of the space around you.

Is the light bright from an overhead fixture or large window? Is the light of the sun shining on you? Is there a glare? Is there a soft glow from a lamp or a flickering candle? Are there shadows from the trees or clouds? What catches the corner of your eye? Do you see the subtle movement from another body? Can you see the color of your shirt? Or do you see the

beckoning light from your phone or computer? Are there people in your midst? Notice the color of the pages of this book. How do they stand in contrast to the lights and colors of the space around you?

Take a deep breath.

Exhale.

### *Debriefing the Warm-up*

We imagine that you, the reader, may engage with some of the prompts and provocations of our sensory focus activity. We hope you tried some of this exercise because we want you to begin thinking about and *noticing* the space around you, and your relationship to and with that space. Pedagogically, warming-up offers a starting place and a way to begin developing focus and attention to particular themes, ideas, and contexts. Warming-up also privileges the body, and embodied ways of knowing and theorizing. For us, warming-up is a way of preparing our bodies to engage with and generate ideas. And this warm-up, in particular, is a way of preparing for our discussion about practice sessions and spaces. This activity also features our commitment to performance and performance studies research in educational contexts.

### *Warming-up with Performance*

In performance studies research, the recognition of the classroom space and the act of teaching as transformational is not a new argument. For example, Stucky and Wimmer (2002) contend: “The classroom is a charged space, a site of performance as well as a place invested in studying performances. Teachers have increasingly come to understand the special characteristics of classrooms as environments where performance holds particular power” (p. 2). The power of performance in the classroom is also noted by Pineau (1994) in her re-conceptualization of the metaphor of teaching as performance. She explains:

The critical question is not whether teaching is or is not a performance. Educational and theatrical stages are not identical, and the aesthetic responsibilities and conventions of the educational performer are not the same as those that govern stage performers. Rather, the inclusionary impulse in performance studies allows us to ask in what ways educational phenomena open themselves up to performance-centered research. How

might the disciplinary knowledge of performance studies enrich pedagogical uses of performance as both metaphor and methodology? (p. 9)

In other words, performance offers a way of transforming and expanding educational spaces and practices that exceeds reductive extensions and applications of theatrical objectives and practices to educational interactions. Throughout this book, we extend the commitments of performance studies research to an embodiment, critical engagement/analysis, and generative practices specifically to the development of a pedagogy that features the space and time for creative practices as a critical imperative.

The warm-up activity at the beginning of this chapter is informed by our commitment to generating a pedagogy that emphasizes embodiment and that recognizes the classroom as a site for working toward and enacting social change. Boal's (1979) call for a theater and poetics of the oppressed presents an ethic that informs our approach to performance, and to the development of embodied engagements in the classroom space such as our warm-up activity. Boal's goal for transforming the space of theater is a goal that resonates with our commitment to the classroom space. He explains:

But the *poetics of the oppressed* focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change—in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action! (p. 98)

For Boal, the theater presents an important space and opportunity for imagining new possibilities for social interactions and relationships. He imagines and works to maintain a theatrical space, without passive spectators. Audience members are, for Boal, potential agents of change, and theater is a space for rehearsing and creating possibilities for liberation. By extending this specification of theater to the classroom space, Boal's ideas provide a framework for engaging students as active participants in working toward change. Boal emphasizes the body, and an awareness of embodiment, as a central aspect of re-imagining the theater as a liberatory space:

We can begin by stating that the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body, the main source of sound and movement. Therefore, to control the means of theatrical production, man must, first of all, control his own body, know his own body, in order to be capable of making it more expressive. Then he will be able to practice theatrical forms in which by stages he frees himself from his condition of spectator and takes on that of actor, in which he ceases to be an object and becomes a subject, is changed from witness into protagonist. (p. 102)

By developing an awareness of the expressive potential of the body, spectators-turned-performers can begin to realize the ways theater may be deployed and engaged as a rehearsal space for social change. Understanding the specificity and potential of the body is a key to marking the shift from a passive audience of spectators to an engaged and active body of performers. In the classroom context, this cultivation of bodily awareness is similarly central to imaging the classroom as a space for creating and enacting change.

One way of drawing attention to our embodied experience is by developing our sensory focus on the ways our bodies function in relationship to and with the spaces we inhabit. As Pineau (1995) explains:

Since performance is a methodology of enactment, a learning by doing, it must proceed through direct kinesthetic engagement with the issues to be explored. Performing bodies function as the vehicle for asking research questions and they become the means of data collection, for they are the site at which the data presents itself to the researcher. (p. 48)

Therefore, the warm-up offered at the beginning of this chapter is one example and possibility for raising questions about the relationship between bodies and pedagogical spaces. By drawing attention to the sensory and sensual experiences of our bodies, we offer a starting place for theorizing and realizing the ways our bodies are always interconnected with the spaces where we learn and interact with each other. The guiding prompts in our warm-up are aimed at foregrounding how: “In the classroom, the body serves not only as a performing ideologically saturated cultural being, but also as an enfolded being situated in education—as a body that is capable of learning viscerally” (Warren 1999, p. 258).

### *Warming-up the Senses: Absences and Presences*

The prompts offered in the warm-up follow the work of Stewart (2011) who proposes “atmospheric attunement” as a process of attending to and pausing to note the ways the world emerges around us. She explains this as:

An attention to the matterings, the complex emergent worlds, happening in everyday life. The rhythms of living that are addictive or shifting. The kinds of agency that might or might not add up to something with some kind of intensity or duration. The enigmas and oblique events and background noises that might be barely sensed and yet are compelling. (p. 445)

This process of engaging the mundane happenings of the world as they emerge, and come to matter, in sensory ways begins to reveal connections and points of contact we share with our world. For example, the sensory cues that are (or are not) available to us through touch, sound, smell, taste, or sight begin to demonstrate the ways we are culturally and individually located in the world. Our privileges, desires, possibilities, and constraints are embedded and revealed in the visceral and everyday phenomena that our bodies contact.

Attending to sensory experience is often characterized by an attention to taken-for-granted aspects of our everyday experiences. Leder’s (1990) phenomenological work demonstrates the ways the body, and technologies of the body, become absent or disappear (p. 35). Westerkamp’s (1974) call for soundwalking and “uncompromised listening” is an approach that attempts to highlight the otherwise taken-for-granted sounds of our environment (p. 18). Similarly, Henshaw’s (2013) extension of soundwalking to olfactory experiences of urban spaces through smellwalks offers an example of the ways attention to particular sensory experiences might inform and shape the ways spaces are understood and engaged.

Attending to the taken-for-granted sensory characteristics of the environment is a practice that can revitalize a sensory understanding of the world. The five senses offer a guiding framework for recognizing and organizing the characteristics of the world (smells, sounds, sights, tastes, and tactile aspects) that might otherwise seem to disappear or become absent. However, the goal of this activity is not to simply catalog the perception of our discrete senses. This engagement also works to center our

attention on the role our body plays in the experience of the world and of making the world present and knowable.

For example, in her consideration of the installation performance work and audio walks of artist Janet Cardiff, Féral (2012) considers the relationship between perception and presence effects. Cardiff's work creates aural experiences and situations for audience members through recordings that either match existing locations or fabricated installations. Féral explains, "Cardiff creates sound effects that give the spectator the impression that he or she is elsewhere, in a real space surrounded by others, though the spectator knows that he or she is in reality alone" (p. 39). For Féral, these installations work to experiment with and highlight the significance of perception and the body in the production of presence effects through what she refers to as a "carnal coefficient" (p. 44). She explains:

In every "presence effect" on the spectator, there is a carnal coefficient brought into play. The body is interpellated by way of the sensory organs (eye, ear), and also by the spectator's sensations, a body which is simultaneously an essential element and an obstacle because it has some opacity. (p. 44)

Sensory perception functions as a necessary multiplier in the production of presence effects. For Féral, presence effects are therefore always a sensed experience; however, these effects are also always mediated by the body. The carnal coefficient is a critical part of the equation in the production of presence effects, and it is also a way of understanding the sensory functions of the body as operating in ways that are interrelated and connected rather than as a set of five discrete sensory tools.

In our warm-up activity, the five senses are engaged in order to both notice aspects of the world that often go unnoticed or are otherwise absent, and to draw attention to the ways bodies make the world present. The carnal coefficient of the body constitutes experiences that are always located in social and cultural spaces. Attending in specific and guided ways to the sensory experience of the world provides an opening for identifying the ways the body always shapes and constitutes the world around us. In the space of the classroom, this activity functions as a way of centering on the body as central to the process of teaching and learning. Not only are bodies often taken-for-granted in educational spaces,



but bodies also constitute what is knowable and what may become knowable in educational contexts.

## CREATIVE PRACTICES AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The metaphors of the practice session and practice space offer a productive starting place for theorizing and enacting creative pedagogical practices. Practice sessions are events for learning, and practice spaces are locations for learning. These metaphors, and this overall project, are informed by work in performance studies, creative pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and CCP. For us, the creative and performative practices that emerge in practice sessions and spaces are practices that can also work toward enacting and realizing the social justice goals of critical pedagogy.

### *Connecting to Performance Studies*

Our work in pedagogy is informed by the research and theoretical perspectives of performance studies. Performance is, for us, both an object of study *and* the primary subject of the classes we teach (Conquergood 1983; Pelias and Van Oosting 1987). To be more specific, performance offers a means of explaining and understanding human communication as an embodied, constitutive, and generative process. Hamera's (2006) definition of performance indicates the significance of performance for our work as teachers and researchers. She explains:

Performance is both an event and a heuristic tool that illuminates the presentational and representational elements of culture. Its inherent 'event-ness' ('in motion') makes it especially effective for engaging and describing the embodied processes that produce and consume culture. As event or as heuristic, performance makes thing and does things, in addition to describing how they are made or done. (p. 6)

Performance offers a productive site of study (performed events, actions, etc.), and it offers a way of explaining and theorizing human interactions as shaped by and generative of cultural forms and formations. Finally, performance offers a strategy for imagining and enacting new and different cultural practices.

In educational and classroom contexts, performance presents a particularly useful model for theorizing learning as an embodied, cultural and critical act (Dolan 1996; Pineau 1994). Performance attends to learning, and ways of knowing, that emerge from the culturally located site of the body (Taylor 2003, p. 3). In other words, a performance studies approach raises questions about how we come to know through our bodies; how our embodied learning and knowing works to enact various cultural formations. For example, Butler's (1988) discussion of gender as a performative accomplishment indicates the interrelated relationship between bodies and culture (p. 523). For Butler, gender is constituted in and through the repetitions of performances that "render(s) social laws explicit" (p. 526). In this way, performance is a critical site of learning about and producing cultural forms of knowledge that carry material consequences.

Performance also offers the potential for the creation of critical and generative responses in educational contexts. Conquergood (2002) explains performance studies can be characterized by a commitment to "creativity, critique, citizenship (civic struggles for social justice)" (p. 152). These commitments inform our use of performance in educational contexts as a method. In other words, we work to recognize learning as embodied and accomplished in performance, but we are also committed to developing new ways of performing, knowing, and enacting culture in our educational practice. In the following section, we discuss the application of performance in educational contexts as a creative and generative practice.

### *Performance as Creative Pedagogy*

Performance studies features methods that generate staged performance work and aesthetic presentations (Pelias 2014, pp. 133–134). These often creative, imaginative, and artistic methods of performance can offer important insights about pedagogical practices, and these methods are also closely related to the goals of a broader sense of creativity in education. Eisner's (2004) argument about the transformative contribution of the arts to the practice of education is similar to the kinds of possibilities performance methods offer education. In terms of the possibilities engendered by an arts-based approach to pedagogy, Eisner maintains:

At the risk of propagating dualisms, but in the service of emphasis, I am talking about a culture of schooling in which more importance is placed on exploration than on discovery, more value is assigned to surprise than to control, more attention is devoted to what is distinctive than to what is standard, more interest is related to what is metaphorical than to what is literal. (p. 10)

Likewise, performance methods in pedagogical contexts (both in the creation of classroom practices and in generating theoretical approaches to teaching) work to privilege discovery, disruption, and emergent ideas.

Pineau's (1994) organizational strategy for articulating the relationship between performance and education in terms of educational poetics, play, process, and power reveals some of the transformative ways performance studies might be used to engage educational contexts. Each of these four categories offers a starting place for our thinking about the relationship between performance studies and pedagogy, and more broadly between performance and creativity in educational contexts.

Pineau (1994) first offers a definition of educational poetics that is characterized by an emphasis on the aesthetic dimensions of teaching and learning, and by attention to the multiple narratives, metaphors, and performances that constitute educational interactions (pp. 10–13). Educational poetics attends to the structures, languages, and practices that constitute educational practices and spaces. The second category Pineau presents as a link between performance and pedagogy is educational play. Play, in and through performance, enables a pedagogy that features improvisation, experimentation, and disruption of taken-for-granted educational and instructional practices (pp. 13–15). The third category Pineau offers is an educational process. In terms of performance, educational process emphasizes performance as a method and process of generating understanding and knowledge in the classroom space (pp. 15–18). Finally, Pineau describes educational power as a way that performance research might be used to develop and enact critiques of educational practices and assumption (pp. 18–21). These four categories offer a starting place for using performance in educational research and for developing pedagogical approaches that emphasize embodied and creative ways of learning and teaching.

The categories of educational poetics, play, process, and power also point to the ways performance can offer a systematic approach to shaping a creative educational practice. Performance can yield a generative

and creative pedagogy, but its performance is also a rigorous endeavor. Finally, it is important to note that our approach to performance as a creative educational practice works to build on the call for creativity in education that is not driven by the goals of standardization and marketability. Rather we are invested in what Harris (2014) refers to as a “process-focused creativity (p. 20). The creativity that performance strives to introduce in educational contexts embraces process, critique, and the productive possibilities of failure (Harris 2014, pp. 20–28). In the following section, we discuss the ways critical pedagogy, CCP, and the goals of social justice education inform our pedagogical commitment to performance.

### *Connecting to Critical Pedagogy*

Critical pedagogy is founded in the writing and teaching of Brazilian literacy educator, Paulo Freire. Freire’s (1970/2000) germinal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, locates injustice(s) as constituted in the reciprocal relationship of oppressor and oppressed. Put simply, the oppressor emerges as s/he accumulates and possesses goods, capital, and therefore power whereas the oppressed is dependent on, underneath, and subservient to the oppressor (p. 64). This system persists over time as new groups of people learn and are educated into their position(s) in the world. The oppressed and oppressor alike internalize this caste system with an elite class and working class. Oppressors work to maintain this system through various mechanisms of dehumanization and what Freire calls, “false generosity” or “false charity,” in which oppressors express benevolence toward the oppressed while the status quo remains intact (pp. 44–45). Freire advocates a pedagogy of the oppressed, in which the oppressed, through a critical consciousness, “*conscientização*,” become aware of the mechanisms that oppress them and develop strategies for taking action to liberate themselves (p. 34).

Though Freire’s program was developed to teach literacy to the Brazilian working class to empower them with the tools and strategies to understand the dominating devices of their government, his work has been extended to educative contexts. Similar to the way the oppressed are educated to inhabit particular statuses, students are also schooled in ways that reproduce particular inequalities. This work has been developed into what is now recognized as critical pedagogy, in which educators, in conjunction with students, work to reveal systemic inequality and

strategize solutions that are in line with social justice. Kincheloe (2008) summarizes this idea in his primer on critical pedagogy:

Any viable vision of critical education has to be based on larger social and cognitive visions. In this context, educators deal not only with questions of schooling, curriculum, and educational policy but also with social justice and human possibility. Understanding these dynamics, critical educators devise new modes of making connections between school and its context as well as catalyzing community resources to help facilitate quality education with an impassioned spirit. With this larger vision in mind and knowledge of these different contexts, educators are empowered to identify the insidious forces that subvert particular students. (p. 7)

Unlike traditional educational methods, critical pedagogy asks educators and students to work together to examine the mechanisms of education and how they function to produce and reproduce larger systems of power, privilege, and access. Ethnographic studies of classroom environments support the development of the body of critical pedagogy research. Notable examples include Willis's (1981) study of British boys schools producing and reproducing a working class, McLaren's (1986/1999) study of cultural ritual in schools, Warren's (2003) critical ethnography of race and performance, Grande's (2004) example of American Indian education, and Pascoe's (2007) study of sexuality and masculinity in schools.

### *Connecting to Critical Communication Pedagogy*

CCP practitioners and scholars have contributed to developed critical pedagogy to include an examination of the ways in which communication constitutes classrooms, students, teachers, learning, and education in particular ways that often reify social hierarchies and systemic inequities. In line with critical pedagogy, Fassett and Warren (2006) describe 10 commitments to frame CCP and distinguish it from critical pedagogy. These commitments include: understanding identity is constituted in communication; understanding power as fluid and complex; understanding of culture as complex and a central component of communication, as opposed to something that is added on; focusing concrete, mundane communication practices to reveal how they are constitutive of larger social structural systems; embracing social structural critique(s) to situate

mundane communication practices; understanding language as constitutive of lived realities; emphasizing pedagogy and research as praxis; developing a complex and nuanced understating of human subjectivity and agency (with students, research participants, co-investigators, etc.); and finally, engaging in dialogue as a metaphor and method for understanding and engaging in relationships (pp. 39–54). In summarizing CCP, Cooks (2010) writes:

CCP places communication as central to any understanding of what it is that we do when we teach and when we learn. That is our expectations of what should take place in any instructional context are created in and through communication. (p. 303)

Cooks further describes how CCP's contribution is unique and enhances what is already happening in critical pedagogy research: "In CCP, both formal and mundane practices become the focus of study and attention: How do teachers and students make sense of what is largely unremarkable, as well as those moments in which something occurs to break the routine?" (p. 304). In other words, CCP scholars maintain commitments and practices of critical pedagogy research and further cultivate it through particular attention to micro-moments of communicative phenomena.

Similarly, CCP scholars often cultivate their research using ethnographic methods. CCP scholars also embrace autoethnographic methods in order to draw attention to communicative productions of identity (class, race, gender, ability, sexuality, etc.) and the ways in which power, privilege, and access affect these productions. Alexander's (2011) explanation of autography helps to frame the role of autoethnography in CCP:

Autoethnography is always about cultures of experience: the presenter uses individual experience as a means of engaging in a public discussion or discourse of the particular happenstance of experience, and others are always interpolated into that experience; either for immediate conversation or reflective engagement on their own processes of sense making. Autoethnography draws on Geertz's (1973) extension of thick description as a means of describing and embodying behaviors, giving the audience an experiential instance for understanding the meaningfulness of expression, and the political importance of the utterance in a larger cultural context. (p. 100)

Gathering and developing a thick description of classroom contexts using ethnographic and autoethnographic methods, CCP scholars can pinpoint how local examples of inequality are directly connected to larger global and social structures of power, privilege, and access.

### *Enacting Social Justice*

While a key element of critical pedagogy is to reveal inequality and the ways in which inequality is maintained and perpetuated, the underlying goal is, as Kincheloe suggests, finding ways to enact social justice. Similarly, CCP scholars cite social justice as the ultimate goal of their teaching and research. Warren and Fassett (2010) argue:

Critical communication pedagogy increases attention to issues of social justice as a fundamental and integral part of our work as researchers and teachers of communication. Too often, the rhetoric that surrounds being in academic life invites us to rest comfortably in unquestioned assumptions, for example, that knowledge is valuable for its own sake or that education is inevitably competitive; however, the critical tradition calls such beliefs into question, asking instead how such knowledge works in the world and for whom such knowledge is produced. (p. 289)

As the keystone of critical pedagogy and CCP research and practice, social justice is central to the way we understand and advocate for creativity to the classroom.

To situate social justice, we draw on Sensoy and DiAngelo's (2012) explanation of "critical social justice." This approach:

recognizes that society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural), and actively seeks to change this. (p. xviii).

Understanding social stratification and wanting to find ways of changing inequality, it is also important to be able to envision what it might mean to realize social justice and live in a just world. In her review of social justice in education, Hytten (2006) describes and defines the tenets of such an environment:

In a just society, there is an equitable distribution of resources, goods, services and opportunities. People are treated as ends in themselves, with the ability to determine their own life goals in interdependent relationship with people around them. They are not used for other people's benefit. (p. 223)

In other words, this approach to social justice in education includes understanding how education functions to stratify individuals in particular ways and tries to find equitable ways to provide access to goods, services, and opportunities in order to undo mechanisms of dehumanization. For us, recognizing inequity and enacting social justice can be accomplished by generating opportunities for students to engage in performance and creativity in the classroom.

### *Enacting Critical Performative Pedagogy*

Just as CCP emphasizes how specific communicative practices constitute the ways bodies are schooled, disciplined, and educated, in order to open up and reveal opportunities for social justice, performance can draw attention to these micro-moments, and through performance, we can begin to imagine and enact change. Building from critical pedagogy and alongside CCP, we align ourselves with what Pineau (2002) has called a "critical performative pedagogy," in which practitioners and scholars draw on the body and embodied performance to reveal and theorize how social structures are created, maintained, and changed in and through performance. She situates the agenda for critical performative pedagogy within three dimensions. First, critical performative pedagogy acknowledges:

inequities in power and privilege have physical impact on bodies and consequently must be struggled against bodily, through physical action and activism. Critical performative pedagogy puts bodies into action in the classroom because it believes this is the surest way to become alive in the social sphere. (p. 53)

This is to say that social inequity manifests on and in bodies. To engage such pressures and structures, bodies act; they must perform.



Second, Pineau explains critical performative pedagogy's commitment to cultivating research that "accounts for how particular bodies present themselves in the classroom and provide detailed and evocative accounts of what one *sees* and *experiences* in the course of a study" (p. 53). It is important to document (write and perform) the specific instances that bodies are affected by power structures. Pineau argues for performance as a way to reveal the embodied implications of and for social ideologies.

Finally, Pineau describes how critical performative pedagogy strategizes ways to extend performance methodologies into contexts beyond the performance classroom. She contends that by employing performance, within a wide array of contexts, students, practitioners, and researchers will gain insights into the ways in which reality is constituted through embodied performance, and how it can be changed in and through bodies.

Drawing from performance studies, critical pedagogy, CCP, and framing our work in critical performative pedagogy, we approach the practice session and the practice space within the realm of performance. We attend to specific communicative and performative moments in pedagogical contexts so we can better understand how identities are performed (and therefore produced) in ways that perpetuate, disrupt, and change social ideology and structures of power, privilege, and access. In our work as teachers and directors we draw on performance as a way to practice Freire's (1970/2000) idea of conscientization, or conscientious raising, and as a powerful mode to enact social justice.

As both a "heuristic" and an "event" performance exemplifies how culture(s) is/are produced and maintained, and offers a productive mode to enact change through generative, constitutive embodiment (Hamera 2006, p. 6). For us, performance is a "process-focused activity" in which we experiment, critique, fail, and try again (Harris 2014). Building on Pineau's (1994) conception of educational poetics, we want to extend our understandings of the ways that performances constitute educational spaces. In this book, we argue for cultivating pedagogical "practice sessions" and "practice spaces," as spaces where we help facilitate performance that works toward liberatory ends. In the following section, we offer our conceptualizations of the practice session and the practice space.

## DEFINING PRACTICE SESSIONS AND SPACES

The metaphors we use to describe and define our pedagogy constitute our educational interactions (Freire 1970/2000; Lakoff and Johnson 2003; McRae 2015b; Stewart 1995; Fassett and Warren 2006). For example, when education is conceptualized as a transaction of information, or what Freire refers to as the banking model of education, teachers become responsible for delivering and depositing information to students (p. 72). The transactional metaphor constitutes educational interactions in terms of exchange and discrete units of knowledge that can be transmitted from teachers to students. This metaphor is consequential in shaping specific educational practices and values. Teachers are responsible and held accountable, for delivering information in ways that can be reproduced by students. There is a distinct separation between the teacher and the student, and curriculum, assessment, and classroom spaces are all designed in ways that reflect and reproduce this separation.

As a response to the banking model of education, Freire (1970/2000) proposes a metaphor that emphasizes interaction. He explains:

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (p. 80)

The dialogic metaphor constitutes educational interactions in ways that invite a pedagogy that is emergent and that invites and creates a curriculum and classroom practice that depends on an understanding of knowledge as co-constituted amongst teachers and students.

The banking model and the dialogic approach to pedagogy presented by Freire both function metaphorically to explain and shape pedagogical interactions. These metaphors are not necessarily good or bad, nor are they neutral ways of framing what matters in education. Both of these metaphors frame educational practices in ways that are value-laden and materially consequential. Often, the metaphors that permeate educational contexts are taken-for-granted; however, as Pineau (1994) explains, metaphors can offer a starting place for designing and

articulating pedagogical philosophy (pp. 12–13). In this way, developing a pedagogical metaphor offers a structural framework for theorizing and generating approaches to teaching and learning. Pineau’s description of the function of metaphors in terms of pedagogy is an important call and reminder of the critical importance for educators to develop their own philosophies of teaching and learning. The ways we, as educators, theorize and explain our teaching matters politically and practically.

Our goal in this book is to advocate for the creation of a pedagogy that privileges performance and creative practices as a way of critically working toward social justice. In particular, we propose the metaphors of the practice session and the practice space as a framework for a pedagogy that features emergent and generative creative practices. If education is *like* a practice session, then ideas are generated over sustained periods of time, through repetition, and by revision and refinement. If education is *like* a practice space, then the physical and theoretical location of teaching and learning enables rehearsal and experimentation. Both the metaphor of the practice session and the practice space invite a wide range of creative approaches in educational contexts. In the following sections, we imagine the pedagogical possibilities of the practice session and practice space metaphors as they are directly related to a creative and critical approach to teaching and learning.

### *Practice Session*

The time for practice is sacred. The practice session occurs as a ritual. It is a time set apart from the everyday. It is a time for the ceremony. It is a time that creates and follows conventions and forms. It is a time that enables change and transformation.

The time for practice is privileged time. The practice session is extraordinary. It is time for rehearsal and repetition. It is a time for experimentation and error. It is a time for revision and refinement. It is a time for making mistakes and revelations. It is a time for creating habits and possibilities. It is a time for generating styles and capacities.

The time for practice is organized and structured. The practice session is purposeful and deliberate. It is the time that is organized by routine. It is the time that is structured by the technical and systematic. It is a time that is organized by the generative and the imaginative. It is a time that is structured by the playful and spontaneous.

The time for practice is persistent. The practice session has duration. It is a time that begins and ends. The practice session has endurance. It is a time that occurs and reoccurs. The practice session has continuity. It is a time that is individual and cumulative.

The time for practice is emergent. The practice session is a process. It is a time that features the incomplete and partial. It is a time that allows for evolution and becoming. It is a time that is marked by adjustment and modification.

The time for practice is educational. The practice session is a learning opportunity. It is a time for reflection and contemplation. It is a time for understanding and comprehension. It is a time for exploration and discovery. It is a time for collaboration and connection. It is a time for examination and insight.

The practice session is a metaphor, and starting place, for theorizing a pedagogy that features and is characterized by the qualities of rehearsal in and across a variety of genres. For example, the practice session metaphor can be linked to rehearsal in the context of theater, music, sport, and ritual. First, this metaphor offers a structure for educational interactions; second, it provides a framework for the relationship amongst teachers and students; and finally, this metaphor privileges an embodied way of learning and knowing.

This metaphor first asks us to think about pedagogical interactions in terms of experimentation, repetition, and preparation. Ideas and concepts are engaged through play, understandings are developed through repetition, and positions are refined and prepared for application in a variety of different contexts. Curriculum and content are framed as dynamic materials that can be engaged from multiple perspectives. And as a practice session, teaching and learning occur as a process of creating and developing understandings that are always contingent on the experience and position of the teachers and students.

Second, this metaphor presents a relationship between teachers and students that positions the teacher as a director, a collaborator, or a mentor. The practice session presents educational interactions that may be guided and shaped by teachers. Teachers may pose questions, present routines and exercises, and offer direct suggestions and instructions. Educational interactions can also emerge as collaborations amongst teachers and students. Ideas and strategies for understanding and engaging course content may emerge in and through conversations and experimentation amongst teachers and students. With the practice session

metaphor, the authority of teachers is neither absolute nor is it entirely absent.

Finally, the practice session metaphor privileges an embodied approach to teaching and learning. Ideas are presented in ways that ask students and teachers to develop their own individual connections to the content. Practice sessions frame learning as a process for generating knowledge at a bodily level. Ideas are generated collectively in and through workshops and repetitions. Practice sessions ask and expect educational interactions to involve the input, expertise, and experience of teachers *and* students. Curriculum is modified by the individual and communal experiences that emerge in the educational interaction. The metaphor of the practice session also invokes and is entangled with the metaphor of the practice space.

### *Practice Space*

The space for practice is sacred. The practice space is a location for the ritual. It is a space set apart from the everyday. It is a space for the ceremony. It is a space for creating and following conventions and forms. It is a space that enables change and transformation.

The space for practice is privileged space. The practice space is extraordinary. It is space for rehearsal and repetition. It is a space for experimentation and error. It is a space for revision and refinement. It is a space for making mistakes and revelations. It is a space for creating habits and possibilities. It is a space for generating styles and capacities.

The space for practice is organized and structured. The practice space is designed purposefully and deliberately. It is space that can be organized by routine. It is space that is structured by the technical and systematic. It is a space that is organized by the generative and the imaginative. It is a space that is structured by the playful and spontaneous.

The space for practice is a physical location. The practice space has physical boundaries. It is a space that can be used for particular activities and movements. It is a space designed for preparation and rehearsal. It is a space that can be manipulated and modified. It is a space that can be transformed by the performances of individuals and groups.

The space for practice is educational. The practice space is a learning space. It is a space that encourages reflection and contemplation. It is a space designed for understanding and comprehension. It is a space that engenders exploration and discovery. It is a space that invites

collaboration and connection. It is a space that allows for examination and insight.

The practice space is a metaphor, and starting place, for theorizing pedagogical practices and educational interactions in the context of physical locations designed for rehearsal. This metaphor imagines the physical location of educational practices, such as classrooms, as spaces for engaging in the embodied process of rehearsal. Three important implications emerge in marking the classroom and educational space as a kind of practice space. First, the practice space metaphor draws attention to the importance and impact of the physical design of educational spaces. Second, the practice space metaphor, like the practice session metaphor, provides a framework for understanding the physical relationship between teachers and students. Finally, the practice space metaphor also emphasizes and values the embodied performances that constitute educational interactions. Ultimately, the practice space is a complementary metaphor to the practice session metaphor that works toward transforming educational interactions.

The practice space metaphor first draws attention to the limits and possibilities of the physical configuration of educational spaces. If the classroom, or other educational contexts, are to be conceptualized as practice spaces, then limits and possibilities of the physical design must be considered. No single design is preferred or required to accomplish a practice space. As de Certeau (1984) contends, “space is practiced place” (p. 117). The performances of the actors (including students and teachers) in a given place create and constitute a space. However, the metaphor of the practice space raises awareness of what Kilgard (2011) refers to as the “performative possibilities” of a classroom or educational space (p. 221). It is important to understand the limits and possibilities of a physical space in terms of the kinds of practice that might be accessible and available. For instance, working in a theater space with moveable seating and lighting provides different opportunities than working in a classroom with stadium seating and fixed lighting. However, as practice spaces, each of these physical locations offers the potential to develop and enact creative possibilities. Practice spaces enable both experimentation with and presentation of ideas. Practice spaces allow for both solitary and collective acts of repetition and rehearsal. Practice spaces are dynamic, malleable, and can accommodate a variety of learning and teaching styles.

Second, the practice space metaphor informs the way the relationship between teachers and students is and can be constituted. For example, if the classroom is a practice space, then teachers and students might enter the space together as collaborators. The practice space invites a process of working, experimenting, and rehearsal that does not rely solely on the authority of teachers over students to deliver information. Teachers may work *with* students to produce and generate knowledge, understanding, and creative possibilities. It is also important to note that the practice space metaphor does not entirely erase, or ignore, the authority of the teacher in the classroom. In a practice space, teachers may also function as directors that lead and indicate directions for engagement and practice.

Finally, the metaphor of the practice space has implications for educational practices in terms of the value and emphasis that is placed on embodied performances. Practice spaces are locations where bodies can come to understand, engage, and transform concepts and ideas. Practice spaces are locations where students and teachers might come to realize the individual and communal implications of the educational curriculum. Practice spaces are also locations where play and experimentation with concepts and ideas might lead to new understandings and possibilities. By presenting and encouraging a philosophy of teaching that is grounded in the metaphors of practice sessions and spaces, we hope to invite the development of philosophies of teaching and learning that work to engage the embodied, the creative, and the critical, as a way of working toward social justice in educational practices.

## ENGAGEMENT: THE CLASSROOM AS A PRACTICE SPACE

### *Engagement Description*

The goal of this engagement to attend to the ways your pedagogical context functions as a practice space. In your classroom, or pedagogical context (perhaps it is a workshop setting or reading group), with students, adjust the physical location. Set up your preferred classroom arrangement. Position furniture, chairs, lighting, sound, visuals, and personal effects, etc. Ask everyone to walk around the space. Ask students what they notice. What movement is possible? How is movement constrained? Encourage students to interact with one another in the space, perhaps directing them to a specific question, concept, or topic. Ask each person to note, or pay attention to their relationships with one another and with

the space. How does talk emerge? Is there a low hum of voices? Does the building rumble? Is there virtual silence? What does physical closeness say about the space and about the relationships amongst the people present?

After taking attending to the common arrangement of the space, rearrange it. Is it possible to reposition furniture, chairs, lighting, sound, visuals, and or personal effects? Can a window be opened or the lights dimmed? Can chairs, desks, or tables move into different configurations? Can music or sound art be introduced into the space via a smart board, radio, iPhone, or having a group sing together? After rearranging the space follow the same pattern as before: Ask everyone to walk around the space. Ask students what they notice. What movement is possible? How is movement constrained? Encourage students to interact with one another in the space perhaps directing them to a specific question, concept, or topic. Ask each person to note, or pay attention to their relationships with one another and with the space. How does talk emerge? Is there a low hum of voices? Does the building rumble? Is there virtual silence? What does physical closeness say about the space and about the relationships amongst the people present?

### *Debriefing Questions*

To debrief this engagement and connect your space to the idea of the practice space, consider the following questions:

#### *How is Our Space Sacred?*

What are the rituals we want to develop (or have developed) that frame our space? In what ways do these rituals maintain particular social norms? What are these norms? In what ways do these rituals change our space, us, or other spaces? For instance, are there routines, conventions, and forms that we follow that are similar to or different from other spaces? How do these routines, conventions, and forms affect our group in the group and beyond?

#### *How Do We Privilege Our Space?*

In what ways do we make room for rehearsal and repetition? What are the habits that we bring to the space? What habits have we created



together? What is our approach to experimentation? What kinds of strategies, modes, styles, etc., are embraced here? What is our attitude toward error? Do we embrace failure(s)? When, under what circumstances?

### *How is Our Space Organized and Structured?*

How is time or activity structured here? Who makes the rules? How are goals decided? How are plans decided? How are the structures of the space developed or imposed? Who maintains organization? When and how is structure disrupted or changed? What are the limits or boundaries? What do the limits or boundaries allow us to generate or imagine?

### *How Do We Understand Our Space as a Physical Location?*

What does our space sound like/look like/feel like/smell like? Are there chairs and tables? Are they moveable? How much space is there for movement? Can the sound/appearance/arrangement/smell be changed? In what ways? Who has the ability (and/or power) to change the physical location? How does the physical location allow us to engage (or limit how we can engage)?

### *How is Our Space Educational?*

What type of learning does our space enable? How do we learn in this space? What strategies, methods, and possibilities do we explore? How does the space invite us to work together? What does our space reflect? In what ways do we reflect in the space? What kinds of knowledge are encouraged here? What can we discover in, about, and from this space? What insights are produced in and by this space?

## CLOSING

Educational contexts, like the classroom, can be imagined in terms of the metaphor of the practice space. What this metaphor offers is a way of framing the physical and theoretical location of teaching and learning as a space designed for a particular pedagogical approach. This is an approach to education that features and emphasizes rehearsal, repetition, and presentation. Physically, the practice space metaphor asks us to develop pedagogical approaches that attend to and notice the implications of the locations

where teaching and learning happen. This metaphor also presents the opportunity for reconfiguring the spaces where we teach and learn, even if only through the most minor of adjustments.

Theoretically, the practice space is a heuristic that serves as the starting place for the overarching goals of this book. This book is a practice space for theorizing teaching and learning in terms of performance, critical pedagogy, CCP, and social justice. Theoretically, the practice space imagines teaching and learning in terms of embodiment, creative experimentation, and critical attention to social inequity. Ultimately, the practice space is a location that invites a pedagogy of practice sessions or rehearsals that work to engage in teaching, learning, and theorizing pedagogy in research. Drawing from critical performative pedagogy, we develop practice spaces and practice sessions to recognize inequity and enact social justice. In the following chapters, we invite you to engage with several different kinds of practice sessions as examples and possibilities for this creative and generative approach to teaching and learning.

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